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Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7664th meeting
Friday, 1 April 2016, 7 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Liu Jieyi	(China)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Santa Rosa
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Akahori
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Walbridge
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Barro
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

The situation in Burundi

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The meeting was called to order at 7.05 p.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): As this is the first formal meeting of the Security Council for the month of April, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Ismael Gaspar Martins, Permanent Representative of Angola, for his service as President of the Council for the month of March 2016. I am sure I speak for all the members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Gaspar Martins and his delegation for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Burundi

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Burundi to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2016/301, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France, Japan and Spain.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): Before we proceed to the voting, I would like to tell you how pleased I am, Mr. President, that we are meeting now to adopt the draft resolution on Burundi contained in document S/2016/301, thus marking the launch of the Chinese presidency of the Security Council, a presidency to which I extend my most heartfelt wishes for success. I would also like to thank all my colleagues and their teams for the constructive discussions that have enabled us to meet here for this important vote. I would briefly like to recall the objectives of our draft resolution.

The draft has five main objectives. The first, and main, objective of our draft resolution is to back African efforts to bring about an emergence from the crisis in Burundi, efforts undertaken by both the East African Community and the African Union. In backing those efforts, we want to contribute to forging inclusive and genuine dialogue — I will come back to this — among Burundians, and to find a peaceful solution to the crisis.

The second objective of this draft resolution is to bolster the United Nations presence in Burundi and strengthen the team of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General, Mr. Jamal Benomar. This is fundamental. We need the United Nations to be more present on the ground and, as the Security Council, we should be able to follow the situation in Burundi closely so that we can be alerted if the situation continues to deteriorate and so that we would be in a position to react in timely fashion to avoid the worst.

The third objective of the draft resolution is to call for the immediate launch of genuine inclusive dialogue between the Burundian Government and all stakeholders committed to a peaceful solution, whether present in their country or not. That is a fundamental message for reconciliation among Burundians.

The fourth objective is to request the Secretary-General to propose to the Security Council options for a United Nations police presence in Burundi, and that within a maximum period of 15 days. The goal in that regard is also to back the efforts of the African Union, which has deployed observers to Burundi.

Finally, the fifth objective is to preserve and consolidate the achievements of the Arusha Agreement by respecting both the letter and spirit of the Agreement. These peace agreements serve more than ever as a compass that should guide all stakeholders in Burundi and the international community.

I will not go any further. I would just like to stress our collective responsibility. France is convinced that the Security Council must do everything it can to help Burundians to return to the path of peace and reconciliation. That is our responsibility as the Security Council. That is our responsibility vis-à-vis the people of Burundi. That is the thrust of our draft resolution.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, China, Egypt, France, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russian Federation, Senegal, Spain,

Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2279 (2016).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like, at the outset, to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I would also like to extend our thanks to Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins, Permanent Representative of Angola, for his prudent presidency of the Council last month.

Egypt welcomes the resolution just adopted by the Council today on the situation in Burundi (resolution 2279 (2016)), which comes as a result of constructive consultations that reflect the great importance accorded by all members of the Council to the situation in Burundi and their desire to find the best ways to help Burundi overcome the humanitarian and security difficulties it faces. The resolution is based on the constructive efforts undertaken by the Government of Burundi to improve the conditions on the ground as well as those undertaken by many international and regional partners over the past few months. Those efforts were reflected in the important visits undertaken by the Secretary-General, the high-level delegation of the African Union and the Burundi country configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as the prior visit undertaken by members of the Security Council in January.

Egypt welcomes the resolution as an important step that will bolster the efforts of the United Nations and regional partners to reach a political solution to the crisis. The mediation role played by the African Union and the East African Community with a view to launching a serious and inclusive dialogue in Burundi has strengthened the foundational work of the United Nations and regional partners together with that of the Burundian authorities and national stakeholders designed to foster a national dialogue that would address the challenges facing Burundi in the areas of security and the rule of law.

In conclusion, Egypt would like to express its wish to continue working with other members of the Council to enforce resolution 2279 (2016) and build on it through further efforts by the United Nations with a view to overcoming the current challenges and difficulties and returning to the pursuit of development and the promotion of peace in cooperation with Burundi's bilateral, regional and international partners.

Mr. Barro (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first statement we are making under your leadership, Mr. President, the delegation of Senegal would like to warmly congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency and wish you every possible success in the coming month. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the delegation of Angola for the way in which it conducted the business of the Security Council during the month of March.

Today's vote follows a series of initiatives undertaken within the framework of the United Nations since the beginning of the year and clearly demonstrates the interest that we have taken in the situation in Burundi. The delegation of Senegal, in taking part in the negotiations on the text of the resolution we have just adopted (resolution 2279 (2016)), has striven to forge, alongside other members of the Council, the consensus that was so evident here today, because in our eyes it is of primary importance that we show a united cohesive front in tackling the situation in Burundi.

It therefore behoves me to pay tribute to the spirit of cooperation and mutual understanding that prevailed and enabled us to achieve this conclusion to a process that was launched a few weeks ago, following the visit of the Council to Burundi. The Secretary-General, as well as a high-level delegation of the African Union composed of five Heads of State and Government, then also visited Bujumbura. With respect to those initiatives, my delegation would especially like to underscore that the current resolution is intended to serve as a formal framework for bringing into harmony all of the international community's efforts.

It is therefore important to take note of the resolution's mention of the main results achieved by the high-level delegation of the African Union and the new momentum generated by the strengthening of regional mediation undertaken by Ugandan President assisted in this since the most recent summit of the East African Community by the former President of Tanzania, Mr. Benjamin Mkapa. In our eyes, the current resolution

could also serve as a tool to enable the Secretariat's team led by Mr. Jamal Benomar to maintain and strengthen its interaction with the regional mediation and the African Union to create conditions conducive to a cessation of violence, the protection of civilians and the effective launch of an inclusive dialogue.

Finally, it seems to us to be of primary importance to recall the necessity to configure the United Nations presence in Burundi in a way to meet all the challenges of the situation, including a gradual approach mindful of the momentum behind the action of regional and continental actors.

Mr. Wilson (United Kingdom): This evening we have sent a clear and unanimous message. It is time for the Government of Burundi to live up to the commitments President Nkurunziza made to the Secretary-General, to the international community and, most important, to the people of Burundi themselves. That means that the Government of Burundi must commit fully to the mediated dialogue and that the Government must show its firm commitment by agreeing to a timetable and a participants list for genuine and inclusive talks.

Support from the United Nations will be critical if the talks are to succeed. We therefore support the strengthening of Special Adviser Benomar's team to buttress the mediated dialogue. But let me be clear: President Nkurunziza needs to commit to working with the United Nations, and he needs to let Mr. Benomar's team provide the technical support that is so vital to the success of genuine dialogue. Such support is not unconditional. The Council and Mr. Benomar need to be clear that the United Nations will not support a Government that habitually commits human rights violations against its own people.

We have sent a clear message today. Through this resolution we have provided valuable tools to help deliver the peace and stability that the citizens of Burundi deserve. Let us now work together to secure that outcome.

Mr. Akahori (Japan): On the occasion of the first meeting of the Security Council for this month, Japan would like to congratulate China on its assumption of the presidency for the month of April. We promise you, Sir, our full cooperation.

Japan welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2279 (2016). I would like to thank France for taking the lead in preparing the resolution, of which Japan is pleased to be a co-sponsor.

The United Nations should work together with the African Union and the East African Community to find a solution to the Burundian crisis through dialogue. We must stop violence and human rights violations in Burundi. As members of the Security Council, it is our responsibility to take action to prevent a further deterioration of the situation on the ground. We expect that the United Nations enhanced presence in Burundi will contribute to strengthening an adequate channel between the Security Council and the Burundian parties. We consider today's adoption an important first step. We look forward to discussing, seriously and actively, the options that will be presented to us by the Secretary-General.

Mr. González de Linares Palou (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to start by congratulating and thanking the Permanent Representative of Angola, Ambassador Gaspar Martins, and his colleagues for their work in leading the Security Council in March. I would also like to express to you, Ambassador Liu Jieyi, our pleasure at seeing at the helm of the Council. I wish you and your team every success in your mandate, as well as a calm and peaceful presidency. Spain would also like to thank France for its resolute and tireless commitment to the adoption of resolution 2279 (2016), as well as the other delegations for their always constructive contributions, made in a spirit of flexibility.

If the Security Council was able to adopt this resolution unanimously this afternoon it was because, beyond the differences we have, there are some fundamental objectives on which we all agree: the urgency of ending the violence afflicting Burundi for months and to return to the path of dialogue — a dialogue that must be genuine and inclusive, based on respect for the Constitution and the Arusha Agreement and open to all actors committed to a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

We hope that this resolution will contribute significantly to national, regional and international efforts to bring peace, stability and prosperity to the people of Burundi, for that is simply the whole of the aspiration of the Council. We will continue working to that end.

Mr. Vitrenko (Ukraine): Let me congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security

Council for the month of April, as well as to express our appreciation for Angola's presidency during the month of March.

My delegation welcomes the adoption of resolution 2279 (2016). We consider today's decision to be the next important step towards the stabilization of the situation in Burundi. Our unity demonstrates the Council's readiness to take responsibility and to react in a timely and efficient manner.

The message to the Government of Burundi should be clear: it should respect, protect and guarantee all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all citizens of the country; and all those responsible for gross violations and abuses of human rights, as well as violations of international humanitarian law, in Burundi should be held responsible.

We welcome the active role of the African Union and of the East African Community in the mediation efforts. In that regard, we would like to underscore that every tool available to ensure the implementation of commitments in the area of human rights by all sides has to be applied in full. To that end, the cooperation of the Government of Burundi with all United Nations and African Union human rights observers, as well as with the United Nations independent investigation on Burundi established by the Human Rights Council last December, is of the utmost priority.

(*spoke in French*)

Taking into account the main role of the countries of the region in mediating and finding a lasting solution to the crisis in Burundi, we would like to underscore the need to increase the pressure by the international community on the Government of Burundi in order to set a concrete and precise timetable of steps to relaunch the inter-Burundian dialogue in a truly inclusive manner.

My delegation believes that the contribution of police is very important to increase the capacity of the United Nations to monitor the security situation and promote respect for human rights. At the same time, we would like to underscore that the effectiveness of that future presence will depend upon on the impartiality of the mandate and clear goals, as well as the availability of the necessary means to carry out its functions.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, and the Chinese delegation on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. I also thank you for convening us this evening.

The situation in Burundi is beyond fragile. The ongoing repression, harassment and violence against the legitimate political opposition, the closure of free and impartial media, and widespread impunity for human rights violations and abuses — including those involving killings and alleged sexual violence by security services against political opponents, members of civil society and others — continue. Almost a quarter of a million Burundians have fled the country since April 2015 out of fear for their lives, and countless more have been internally displaced. People do not flee in the hundreds of thousands unless there is a very serious problem.

Against that backdrop, let us be clear: progress will be measured by peace, and peace will come from genuine political dialogue that is inclusive. To date, while there have been opening ceremonies, the real discussions have not commenced. We strongly support former President Mkapa in his efforts to move the process forward and we urge that a date be scheduled for discussions to begin. Each day that this crisis continues makes it that much harder for Burundi to regain the progress it has achieved over the past decade, risking a much longer-term and much deadlier crisis.

While in our discussions some pointed to the release of a "significant number of prisoners", resolution 2279 (2016) does not do that. The resolution instead welcomes "the steps made by the Government of Burundi" towards that end and urges them to fulfil their commitments. The progress made by the Government of Burundi to date is woefully insufficient. There have been plenty of press releases, but not enough political prisoner releases. We acknowledge the Government's acts of clemency for prisoners who are old, under-aged or infirm, but that is not the same as releasing political prisoners, and they must begin to deliver on those important promises.

We have been promised that free media would be allowed to operate, but only two out of five banned outlets are today operating. It was agreed that 200 African Union (AU) human rights and military observers would be deployed, but today there are currently 32 human rights observers and 15 military observers on the ground in Burundi, and they do not have a memorandum of understanding with the Government.

Recognizing the enormity of those problems, today's action by the Security Council is indeed important. With this resolution, the Security Council expresses its support for the African Union's efforts in Burundi, including the deployment of the 200 AU human rights observers and military observers. We call on the Government of Burundi to cooperate fully to facilitate the implementation of the mandate of the human rights observers and military experts.

With this resolution, the Security Council endorses the East African Community-led, regionally mediated dialogue. Only such an inclusive and regionally mediated dialogue can resolve this crisis and restore stability to Burundi. We urge all stakeholders to expedite the resumption of the dialogue in pursuit of a peaceful and consensual path forward for Burundi.

With this resolution, the Security Council urges the Government of Burundi to deliver in reality what it has committed to in the press.

With this resolution, the Security Council has sent a strong message to the Government of Burundi and the opposition to cease all violence, refrain from provocation and commit to peacefully resolving this crisis through dialogue — a dialogue based on respect for the Arusha Agreement.

And with this resolution, we are today sending a more robust, larger international civilian presence into Burundi to advance political dialogue, security and the rule of law. We are also asking for options for the deployment of a police mission, which should include options on the deployment of formed police units, to Burundi to advance rule of law.

The United States appreciates the efforts the Security Council members and our colleagues made to find consensus on this important resolution.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of China.

China believes that political dialogue is the only way out of the situation in Burundi. China welcomes the positive efforts by the Government of Burundi to safeguard the stability of the country and promote national reconciliation, and encourages all parties in Burundi to actively participate in dialogue and resolve their differences peacefully.

China has always supported Africa in resolving African issues in an African way and appreciates the constructive mediation efforts on this issue by the East African Community and other relevant regional and subregional organizations. The unanimous adoption of resolution 2279 (2016) by the Security Council signifies the strong support of the international community for the East African Community-led mediation and demonstrates the firm support of the international community for a political settlement for this issue. China hopes that by implementing resolution 2279 (2016) the relevant parties will fully respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Burundi, strengthen their consultation with the Government of Burundi and jointly agree on a solution so as to achieve peace, security, stability and development in Burundi at an early date.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Burundi.

Mr. Shingiro (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, Mr. President, my delegation would like to congratulate you personally and your country, the People's Republic of China, for acceding to the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. I would also like to thank you, Sir, for having organized this important meeting devoted to the adoption of resolution 2279 (2016), on Burundi, especially as it takes its place following resolution 2248 (2015), which remains very topical.

I would also like to thank all of the other members of the Security Council that have spared no effort to assist Burundians to find their own solutions to political issues that concern them. I would also thank you, Mr. President, for the great flexibility you have shown during several hours of intense negotiations, which reflects your awareness of the lofty responsibility you have to safeguard international peace and security, which is, of course, the main mission of the Council.

Without taking an exhaustive look at the entire resolution that has just been adopted, I would like to make a few general comments — constructive ones, of course — on certain passages of the text that are important for peacebuilding process in Burundi.

I would like to begin with the preambular part, which is dominated by the question of the protection of human rights and the promotion of the rule of law, and by

the fight against impunity in particular. My delegation takes note of the appeals of the Security Council on this matter and promises to do everything it can to ensure that this advice would be followed by concrete facts on the ground in an atmosphere of total transparency.

On this specific issue, however, I would like to recall that the Government of Burundi has always attached great importance to human rights issues. We have adopted a zero-tolerance policy with respect to human rights, and the National Independent Human Rights Commission is working day and night to take up this challenge. Despite the very tangible progress on the ground, we humbly acknowledge that there have been human rights violation here and there, as there have been elsewhere. We have set up a judicial commission of inquiry to shed light on certain allegations of human rights violations since the beginning of the uprising to the present day. Resolution 2279 (2016) refers to this in its preambular part and in paragraph 2.

We furthermore recall that the Government of Burundi has made the fight against impunity the centrepiece of its priorities, and all of this without taking into account political affiliations. We cooperate very closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to which we have given free access to our services for reasons of transparency. We have offered the same quality of cooperation with United Nations human rights experts who, as you know, Mr. President, visited Burundi from 1 to 8 March.

With respect to freedom of expression and civil society, I would like to inform Council members once again that Burundi has a great tradition of freedom of expression as well as a tradition of active civil society in the region, and we would like to strengthen this practice and make it permanent. That leads me to thank the Council for having acknowledged, through paragraph 4 of the current resolution, the recent good measures taken by the Government of Burundi with a view to easing political tensions and restoring confidence among the financial and technical partners of our country.

As is underscored in the resolution the Council has just adopted, we recently authorized the reopening of private radio stations that were destroyed in the wake of the attempted coup of 13 May 2015, namely, the Radio Isanganiro and Radio-Television Rema FM, which are both back on the air broadcasting freely throughout the national territory. Besides those stations, which have been authorized to resume their activities, the National Council of Communication also has authorized two private radio stations — Izere FM and Humuriza — and without forgetting, I would stress, that judicial proceedings against two civil society non-governmental organizations were lifted, namely, PARCEM and AJCB, which now have free access to their bank accounts. That is something new.

With respect to political dialogue, we reiterate our firm commitment to continuing an inclusive, frank and sincere inter-Burundian dialogue among the peaceful and clearly committed young men and women of the country, those from within the country as well as those in the diaspora, who are determined to find peaceful solutions to our disputes. We also welcome the fact that paragraph 5 of the resolution refers explicitly to the importance of conducting a dialogue with only non-violent actors, which automatically excludes the coup plotters who wanted to overthrow democratic institutions through unconstitutional means, which violates the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

From a regional point of view and within the East African Community, consultations are ongoing with the facilitation and with the region in order to come to an agreement — some delegations have pointed this out — on two important points, namely, who should take part in the dialogue in an objective way and what the agenda will be, that is, what will be discussed at the next session. Those are two very important issues. If the dialogue has taken some time, it is not because of the Government. We are ready to start even tomorrow. Just give us the date and the agenda, and we are ready to start and meet our compatriots. We therefore remain quite committed to the dialogue in good faith. As the Council is aware, the internal dynamics are very advanced under the leadership of the National Commission for the Inter-Burundian Dialogue, which has done an excellent job throughout the country so that everyone can have their say.

With regard to security, I confirm that it is generally good throughout the national territory and that citizens are going about their activities in calmly, except for some residual elements of the opposition who continue to throw grenades at peaceful citizens. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the fact that the Council has recognized the decrease in killings in Burundi and has condemned the use of force to achieve

political objectives, whatever its origins or its authors, including strong condemnation of the indiscriminate throwing of grenades at peaceful citizens. We hope that this message will be heard by those who remotely guide such acts from host countries abroad. I note in passing that no ideology or political struggle can justify such senseless acts that take the lives of women and children in our country.

Still on the subject of security, with regard to the desire to continue the disarmament process in transparency and full cooperation with our partners, the Government of Burundi agreed, before the high-level delegation of the African Union, to the deployment in Bujumbura of 100 human rights observers and 100 unarmed military observers to observe what we are doing. For us, transparency is a priority. If the observers are not all yet in Bujumbura, it is not because of the Government. The President made a firm commitment, and we are ready to receive them at any time. If there are administrative delays on the part of the other party that has to sign the memorandum of understanding, for Burundi's part we are prepared to do so at any time. It is a matter of improving the existing memorandum — merely a matter of changing the number of observers. Again, we are acting in good faith. We are not stalling.

With regard to cooperation with the United Nations, Burundi would once again like to reiterate before the Council its full cooperation with the country team and with the team of the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. Jamal Benomar. We take note of the offer of the contribution of police stipulated in paragraph 10 of resolution 2279 (2016), which will of course be determined in consultation with the Government of Burundi. My country remains available to the Secretary-General to discuss and agree upon the nature, size and tasks of the police presence in support the team of the special adviser envisaged in resolution 2248 (2015).

In that regard — and this is extremely important to emphasize — I recall that the primacy of the option of an un-armed international presence was one of the recommendations of the latest Summit of Heads of State of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa; of the the high-level delegation of the African Union made up of five Presidents that visited Bujumbura from 25 to 26 March; of the meeting of the ministerial committee of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region held on 10 February in Luanda; and of the Government of Burundi itself via its Parliament. All those actors have opposed an armed international, preferring instead the presence of human rights observers and unarmed military experts. That unarmed configuration, and I emphasize this, which is also the preference of the African Union, is what we expect to discuss in detail with the Secretariat in a spirit of openness and respect for national sovereignty.

With regard to acts of aggression from Rwanda, which several credible reports have established, including at the United Nations, my delegation welcomes the call on regional States in paragraph 8 of today's resolution to contribute to a peaceful resolution of the situation in Burundi and to refrain from supporting the activities of armed groups. The resolution also reminds all States of the region to respect the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region and the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Among other things, that Convention emphasizes the need to respect the civilian character of refugee camps — as recalled as well by the Secretary-General himself here on 21 March (see S/PV.7653) in the presence of several ministers from the region. We hope that Kigali will unequivocally hear that call by the Council so that that neighbouring country, with which we share so much, immediately ceases to facilitate the recruitment, training and arming of the negative forces that commit acts of aggression in our country. We also welcome the fact that paragraph 9 of the resolution also pertains to actors outside Burundian territory, including others in the region.

With regard to cooperation with our partners, we appreciate the fact that the Council pays particular attention to the issue in the preambular part of the resolution, notably by encouraging bilateral and multilateral partners and the Government of Burundi to continue their dialogue in order to create a favourable environment for a resumption of assistance to Burundi.

I would like to conclude by saying that my country of course welcomes that appeal. We remain very committed to make every effort to rectify the situation at the political and security levels, in the interests of the Burundian people and of the region.

The meeting rose at 7.45 p.m.